



National Museum of
Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

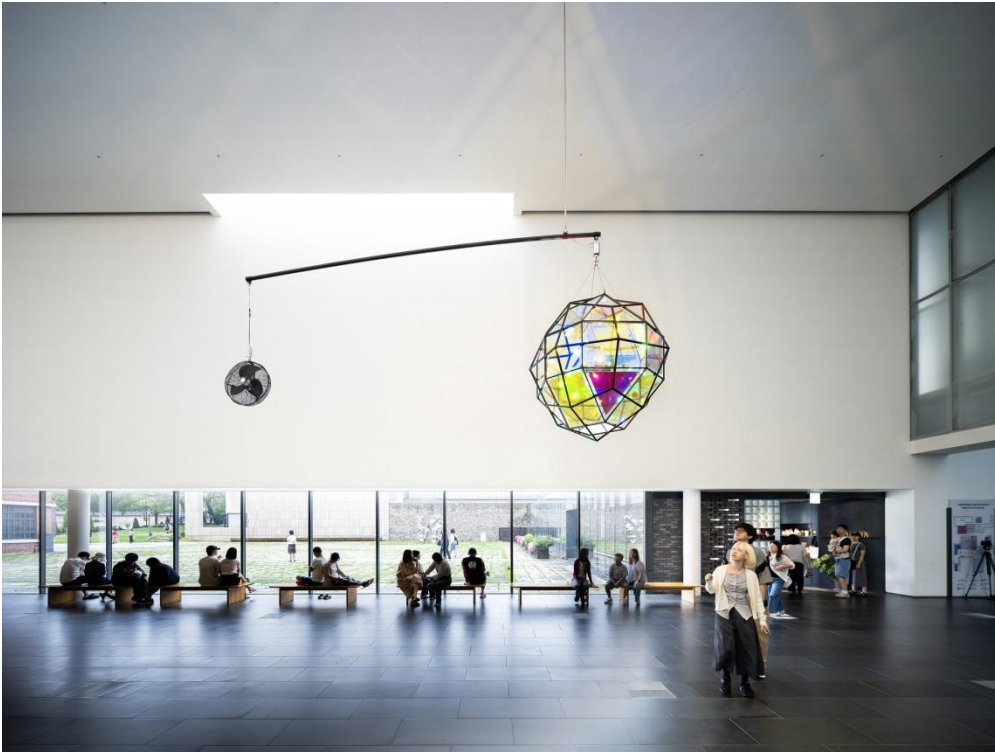


Photo Jung Jihyun, 2026.

MMCA Unveils Olafur Eliasson's New Commission, *The unpredictable orbit*

20 October 2026

The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA; Acting Director Taewook Youn) presents the world premiere of ***The unpredictable orbit***, a newly commissioned work by internationally renowned contemporary artist **Olafur Eliasson**, in the lobby of MMCA Seoul from mid-August through the end of October 2026.

The unpredictable orbit is a site-specific commission conceived for a public space such as the lobby of MMCA Seoul, where natural daylight and artificial illumination come together. Suspended from the ceiling, a long boom is balanced by a luminous compound polyhedron at one end and a fan at the other. The irregular action of the fan sets the entire structure into slow yet unpredictable motion, while light from within the glass polyhedron projects colourful polygons and subtle shadows onto the surrounding space. As daylight mingles with the artificial light, the geometric forms soften into fields of colour and intersecting lines,

transforming the entire space into an ever-changing environment of light. As daylight fades, vivid projections of coloured light and shadow increasingly fill the space.

At the heart of the artwork is a compound polyhedron created by combining two dual polyhedra, demonstrating a geometric principle in which contrasting forms come together to create a unified order. Such complex geometries have long been part of Eliasson's artistic vocabulary. As the work moves, visitors experience through their own bodies the continuously changing relationships between light, movement, and space.

The artwork's simple mechanism recalls Alexander Calder's mobiles, while the illuminated glass polyhedron evokes traditional lanterns found throughout Asia. In this way, *The unpredictable orbit* recalls both tradition and memories of childhood, while opening up new forms of perception and experience through a contemporary exploration of light, movement, and space.

The work is the first project commissioned under “**Contemporary Artist's Commission on Tour,**” part of MMCA's 2026 “**MMCA Together**” programme. This new initiative seeks to broaden public access to culture by sharing cultural content previously concentrated in the Seoul metropolitan area with audiences across the country, while contributing to the vitality and sustainability of regional cultural ecosystems.

With regional touring envisioned from the outset, the artist was selected through a process of curatorial recommendation and review, and Eliasson's new work is the first commission to be realised through the programme. Conceived for shared public spaces such as museum lobbies, the work will make its debut and undergo operational testing at MMCA Seoul from August through October 2026. It is then scheduled to be installed at Jeonbuk Museum of Art from November 2026 and at Gangneung Art Museum Sorol from February 2027. Through this initiative, audiences beyond the Seoul metropolitan area will have opportunities to experience a newly commissioned work by a leading international contemporary artist in a range of public spaces across Korea.

As part of the “MMCA Together” initiative, this work was acquired and donated with the generous support of the MDC, which has steadfastly supported the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) for the past 15 years, generating the momentum for the acquisition and the work's subsequent nationwide tour.

Established in 2011 to support the museum's institutional development and the enrichment of its collection, the MDC is a network of business leaders committed to advancing the museum's mission. Since its inception, the council has facilitated the donation of major works by internationally renowned artists, including Moon Kyungwon & Jeon Joonho, Hito Steyerl, Jenny Holzer, Anri Sala, Wael Shawky, and James Turrell, making substantial contribution to the enhancement of the museum's permanent collection. The project was also supported by HS HYOSUNG (H.S. Cho), a founding member of the MDC.

Speaking about the new commission, Olafur Eliasson said “Korea is a special place where nature and the city, tradition and contemporaneity, coexist. Rather than being a single sculpture, *The unpredictable orbit* is an experience created together through light, movement, and people. The artwork continuously reveals different appearances as time and light change, and visitors, while looking at the work, also become part of it. I hope the work offers people an opportunity to experience the space around them in a slightly different way and to rediscover their own senses and perceptions.”

Taewook Youn, Acting Director of MMCA, said “We have long considered the need for an artwork that welcomes visitors in the very first space they encounter upon entering the museum. From its inception, this project was conceived not only for MMCA Seoul but also to travel through public spaces in museums across Korea, encountering new environments and new audiences. The work is relatively straightforward to install and de-install, yet its rotating light and shadows transform the entire space and interact naturally with the people within it.

“The Contemporary Artist’s Commission on Tour programme goes beyond the conventional model of a touring exhibition. It seeks to connect regional communities with contemporary art from the very stage at which new work is produced. Eliasson’s new commission attracted particularly strong interest during our survey of potential touring venues, and we look forward to it offering new sensory experiences to audiences in many different regions.”

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Notes to editors

For high-resolution images of the museum, please follow the link: [here](#)

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Appendix 1. CV of the Olafur Eliasson



Portrait of Olafur Eliasson (photo: Louise Yeowart, 2024)

Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967)

Olafur Eliasson is one of the leading contemporary artists exploring human perception and spatial experience through elements such as light, colour, water, air, mirrors, and movement. Moving across installation, sculpture, architecture, and public art, his practice connects art with science, philosophy, architecture, and the environment. Rather than presenting an artwork as a self-contained object, Eliasson proposes it as an experience that is activated through the movement and senses of visitors and through changes in the surrounding space.

Since establishing **Studio Olafur Eliasson** in Berlin in 1995, he has expanded the possibilities of artistic practice through collaborations with specialists from a wide range of disciplines, including artists, architects, engineers, researchers, and craftspeople. He gained international recognition with *The weather project*, installed in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern, London, in 2003, and has since presented major solo exhibitions and site-specific projects at leading museums around the world. Works including *Your rainbow panorama* (2011), *Ice Watch* (2014–2018), and *Lifeworld* (2024) exemplify his ongoing exploration of the relationships between nature, cities, architecture, and public space.

Eliasson has also extended his artistic practice towards new ways of engaging with society and the environment. In 2012, he co-founded the solar-energy project **Little Sun**, which continues to promote access to sustainable energy. In 2019, he was appointed **Goodwill Ambassador for Renewable Energy and Climate Action by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.

Rather than offering a single answer through his work, Eliasson approaches art as an invitation for people to experience themselves and the world around them anew. This philosophy creates a relationship in which visitors not only look at an artwork but also become aware of their own presence through it, encouraging us to reconsider how we perceive the world through light, movement, and space.

Appendix 2. Image of the Artwork



Olafur Eliasson, *The unpredictable orbit*, 2026

Stainless steel, colour-effect filter glass (pink, blue, green, orange, magenta, cyan, yellow, red), fan, aluminium, spotlights

210 × 500 × 150 cm (H × W × D)

MMCA collection

Photo: Jung Jihyun

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Appendix 3. Installation View

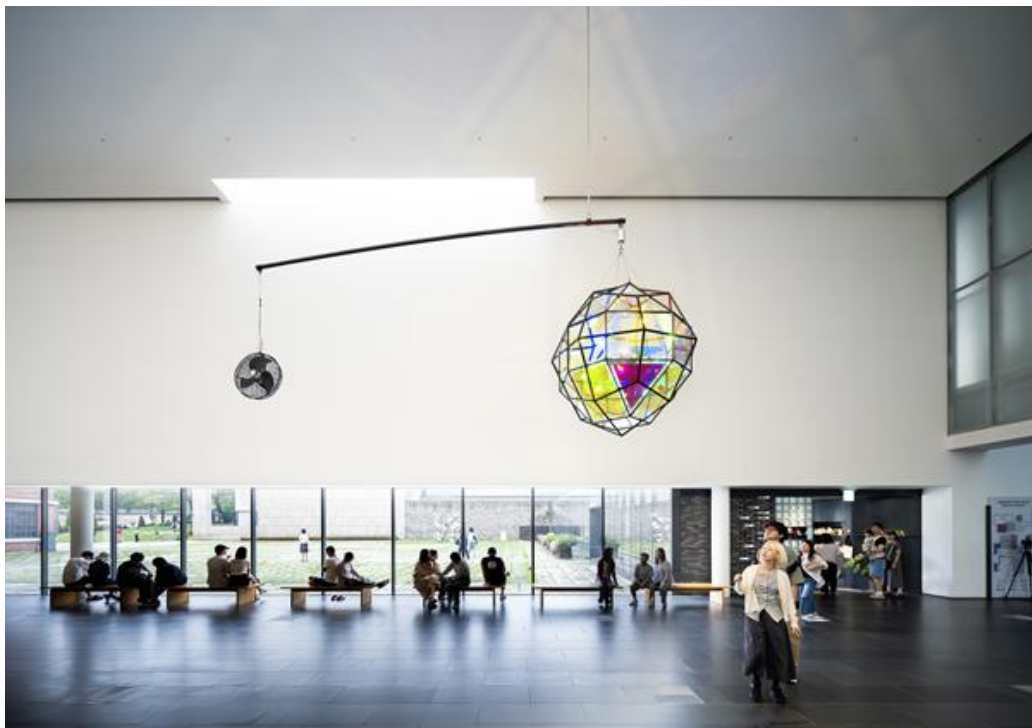


Photo Jung Jihyun, 2026



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[Appendix 4] Acknowledgements

The acquisition and donation of this artwork were made possible through the generous support of the MDC, a longstanding supporter of the museum.

The MDC

The MDC is a network of business leaders established in 2011 to foster the museum's growth and support its art acquisitions. As of 2026, the council comprises 20 members including Kyungbae Suh, Chairman of Amorepacific; Suk-Mynn Yoon, Chairman of TY Holdings; Yongsoo Huh, Vice Chairman & CEO of GS Energy; and Yong-jin Chung, Chairman of Shinsegae Group. Through annual contributions, the MDC has supported a wide range of MMCA initiatives, including commissioned projects and collection expansion over the past 15 years.

Beginning with its first donation in 2012 of Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho's *News from Nowhere* (2012), the MDC has contributed to enriching the diversity of the museum's collection, with a particular focus on new media art. Its donations encompass diverse practices in contemporary art, including Hito Steyerl's *Liquidity Inc.* (2014), alongside works by Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Doug Aitken, Anri Sala, Šejla Kamberić, and Wael Shawky.

The MDC has also supported the donation of major works by internationally renowned artists, such as Jenny Holzer's *For You* (2019), a commissioned work that drew attention for its use of Korean text and *Selections from Truisms* (2019), permanently installed outdoors at MMCA Gwacheon as part of the MMCA Commission project *For You: Jenny Holzer*, presented concurrently at MMCA Seoul and MMCA Gwacheon. More recently, the MDC has generously donated a work by James Turrell, now featured in *Imaginations in Light*, a project celebrating the 40th anniversary of MMCA Gwacheon.